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SOUTH WEST ASIA

Talking pts for
H.B.

The Chinese see an alarming increase in present and potential Soviet influence in South West Asia, ranging from India to Yemen. They see the events over the past year in Iran, and now, even more alarmingly, in Afghanistan, as a critical test of our will and ability to protect a crucial Western position in the Gulf. You will want to make clear to them what we intend to do and spell out certain other actions we and they might undertake in consultation.

You should say:

- The Soviet move into Afghanistan is unacceptable. They could have a predominant position in a neutral state but not turn Afghanistan into a member of the Soviet military bloc.

- We intend to make them pay as high a price as possible, largely to deflect any temptation to try to duplicate such a feat in Iran or later, in Pakistan. Iran, in particular, unlike Afghanistan, has a great geo-political and economic importance to us.

- We also see the move into Afghanistan as aimed at Chinese prestige in Pakistan and India, as well as U.S. interests in the Gulf. We have a number of proposals to make for Chinese action.

- The first task is to make the Soviets pay as high a price as possible in Afghanistan.

- We intend to supply weapons to the rebels, on a covert basis, although the divided loyalties of the opposition to the Kabul government and the very large Soviet commitment make it doubtful that we can force the Soviets out of the country in the short term.

- To assure ourselves the best information and the best opportunities for cooperation, we propose formal intelligence exchanges with you on this subject.

- We will press for action in Muslim Arab and international bodies. We are not well placed in all these to take the initiative, but will do so where we can. Chinese calls for action could be very helpful.

- The NAM is a crucial forum for debating this invasion. We would like to see Cuban leadership blunted, and Soviet Third World appeal dimmed, by the Afghanistan initiatives. We want to consult with China on how to approach this question.

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- We will make sure that the full story of Soviet repression of Muslims is beamed into the Soviet Union as well as into the region from Indonesia to Morocco.

- We will try to improve our relations with Iraq. There are some signs which suggest we could succeed, to some extent, but Saddam Hussein may be frozen by the ideology or internal politics of Iraq into opposition to us.

- Until the hostages are released we intend to do little in Iran, but we will work for a better regime there afterwards.

- In Pakistan, we are unlinking our sales of military equipment from the nuclear issue, and will consider how we can help Pakistan with its financial problems, both bilaterally and in international groups. It would help if China could provide arms for the Afghan nationalists and for Pakistan also.

- We will ease our arms sales policies in the Gulf and in India too and look for opportunities to get local cooperation for the significantly increased force presence we plan in the area of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

- We are making sizeable increases in our Defense budget and building a force capable of rapid deployment to troubled areas.

- It would be of considerable importance to this overall effort if China could work to improve its relationships with India. We must bring India---the strongest state in the Sub-continent and a key critic of the Soviet Union in the NAM---along as we try to strengthen Pakistan militarily and economically. The Soviets now play skillfully on Indian anxiety about China.

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Over the Horizon Radar

A system providing the Chinese with early warning of Soviet attack in force would obviously be useful to Beijing. Overt-the-horizon detection (OHD) of missiles or aircraft utilizes the ionosphere, whose properties vary considerably with location, time of day and season as well as sunspot activity. Because of seasonal variation it is necessary to know these properties at a given location over a full cycle of seasons, so that the OHD radar can be designed for optimum performance. Installation of an OHD radar system, therefore, requires a year's lead time for site survey (which could be conducted in parallel at various site locations). In current circumstances the Chinese would probably acquiesce in US monitoring at a number of sites, so long as these are not too numerous. Surveying would have to be fairly extensive, however, since several candidate sites will have to be checked for installation, and several installations would be needed to give complete coverage of the USSR. Practical application of an OHD system would point to an array that would be able to provide early warning of nearly simultaneous launches of many missiles to provide early warning of nearly simultaneous launches of many missiles would be impracticable. The simplest of OHD systems of this sort would require at each site a transmitter of several hundred kilowatts power and a relatively large antenna. These components are difficult to detect from the air, but the Soviets would easily recognize the signature of the transmitter and could take effective countermeasures. Greater sophistication in the systems would make both detection and countermeasures more difficult. If components of simple system were available in modular form, the system could be set up and test in the US before installation in China and while the site survey was underway. Operation personnel could be trained simultaneously; the technical expertise required to operate the system is not great and well within Chinese capabilities. Therefore, within several months after the site survey is complete a relatively simple system could be operating. Costs would probably run in the range of something under ten million dollars. More sophisticated systems, which would change transmitter frequencies, making detection and countermeasures harder, would cost more and take longer to deploy.

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The Chinese would, in current circumstances, welcome a US offer to supply an OED system, taking it as concrete evidence of US interest in promoting a "secure and stable" China, as well as a good indication that Washington did not expect an early improvement of relations with Moscow and was taking countermeasures with respect to Soviet expansionism as manifest in Afghanistan. Deng Ziaoping in particular would adduce this evidence of US interest in a stronger Sino-US security relationship to enhance his own political position (which has been based in part on demonstrating the utility of the US connection)--a position which may have been marginally weakened recently. Deng is almost certainly strong enough to secure Chinese acceptance of a US offer, but his increasing identification of the US could cause him future political problems as the Chinese political pot continues to bubble. Problems regarding to US connection, however, would only be likely to arise if the Chinese conclude that Washington was relying exclusively on its connection with China to "punish" the Soviets and was not taking effective measures to strengthen itself in other spheres. The Soviets would undoubtedly be deeply disturbed by evidence that the US was actively abetting Chinese military defenses. They would conclude that Washington has written off early ratification of SALT II and would be unprepared to play even a passively useful role in situations analogous to the UN debate on Iran. Despite its genuine anger, however, Moscow is likely to recognize that a connection exists between its actions in Afghanistan and the US supply of OED to China. It would in any event be unlikely to consider this development a sufficient provocation as to lash out militarily against either the US or China.

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Two other projects of interest in connection with establishing a security relationship with China would be possible sales of antitank missiles (Chinese have shown great interest in discussions with Europeans) or P-3 ASW aircraft (Chinese have approached Lockheed on this one).

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